What is claimed is:

1. A computer system comprising:

a first computer device that transmits requests for digital files across a first network to a server connected to a second computer device that routes digital files;

a local area network that does not include the first network and connects the first computer device to the second computer device;

wherein the second computer device receives the requested digital files and is programmed to route a first digital file to the server and to route a second digital file through at least a portion of the local area network to the first computer device.

2. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the first computer device includes computer executable instructions for allowing a user of the first computer to determine whether a digital file is a first digital file or a second digital file.

3. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the second computer device includes computer executable instructions for determining whether a digital file is a first digital file or a second digital file.

4. The computer system of claim 3, wherein the determination is based on the size of each digital file.

5. The computer system of claim 3, wherein the determination is based on a traffic condition of the local area network.

6. The computer system of claim 3, wherein the determination is based on the time of day.

7. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the first network includes a broadband switch coupled to the first computer device with an ordinary telephone line.

8. The computer network of claim 1, wherein the server is a video server that includes a module for decompressing video files.

9. A method of requesting and receiving a file from a remote source, the method comprising the steps of:

(1) transmitting via a local area network a request for the file from a first computer device to a second computer device that routes files;

(2) receiving the file at the second computer device; and

(3) transmitting the file from the second computer device to the first computer device via a path that does not include the local area network.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the path includes a video server that stores and receives

13

video files.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the path further includes an ordinary telephone line.

12. A method of downloading a video file from a remote source connected to a wide area network, the method comprising the steps of:

(1) selecting a file located at the remote source connected to the wide area network;

(2) determining whether the file should be transmitted from the remote source to a first computer device via a local area network or via an alternate transmission path that does not include the local area network; and

(3) causing a second computer device to route the file in accordance with the determination made in step 2.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the determining step comprises selecting the local area network or the alternate transmission path based on the size of each digital file.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the determining step comprises selecting the local area network or the alternate transmission path based on a traffic condition of the local area network.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein the determining step comprises selecting the local area network or the alternate transmission path based on the time of day.

16. A method of routing a digital file to a first computer connected to a remote source via a local area network and an alternate transmission path that does not include the local area network, the method comprising the steps of:

(1) receiving a digital file at a second computer device that routes files;

(2) determining the size of the digital file;

(3) transmitting the digital file from the second computer device to the local area network when the digital file is less than a predetermined size; and

(4) transmitting the digital file from the second computer device to the first computer device via the alternate transmission path that does not include the local area network when the digital file is greater than the predetermined size.

17. A computer system comprising:

a first computer device that transmits requests for digital files across a local area network to a second computer device that routes digital files;

an alternative transmission path that does not include the local area network and connects the first computer device to the second computer device;

wherein the second computer device receives the requested digital files and is programmed to route a first digital file through the local area network to the first computer and to route a second digital file through the alternative transmission path to the first computer device.

18. The computer system of claim 17, wherein the second computer device includes computer executable instructions for determining whether a digital file is a first digital file or a second digital file.

19. The computer system of claim 18, wherein the determination is based on the size of each digital file.

20. The computer system of claim 18, wherein the determination is based on a traffic condition of the local area network.

21. The computer system of claim 18, wherein the determination is based on the time of day.

22. A computer system comprising:

a computer device that transmits a request for a digital file through an ordinary telephone line to a broadband switch;

a video server coupled to the broadband switch and that receives the request and transmits the request to a router;

a local area network that connects the computer device to the router and does not include the video server; and

wherein the router receives the requested digital file and includes computer-executable instructions for performing the steps of:

(1) determining the size of the digital file;

(2) transmitting the digital file to the local area network when the digital file is less than a predetermined size; and

(3) transmitting the digital file to the video server when the digital file is greater than the predetermined size.